

Computerized Freeways Just Around Corner

By HENRY C. MacARTHUR
Capitol News Service
SACRAMENTO — One thing leads to another in California, as the State Division of Highways is finding out.

The state has spent millions of dollars building a freeway system to relieve congestion, and now it finds that on some parts of the system, congestion is so bad it may be necessary to spend a few more millions to relieve the situation.

Gordon C. Luce, state secretary for business and transportation, has outlined

a plan titled "An Operational and Experimental freeway surveillance and control system for Los Angeles," which involves the planting of little wires in freeway pavement to be the basic element of a "sophisticated electronics system designed to monitor constantly a 42-mile section" of the Los Angeles Freeway network.

The wires, known as sensors, would combine with other equipment, to enable examination of the entire network sixty times each second.

"When traffic slows down

or stops," Luce said, "It would sound the alarm and identify the exact location of the bottleneck."

Computers would tell the individuals who man the control stations what to do in the case of traffic stoppage, gives exact locations, and thus enable rescue crews to get to the scene in a hurry.

It will cost approximately \$725,000 for installation of the basic surveillance system, and \$113,000 a year for operational costs, Luce said.

Extensive surveys have

been made by the Division of Highways to determine what benefits would accrue to the motorist.

"Studies show," Luce said, "that recurrent delay now in effect on the 42-mile system averages 150,000 vehicle minutes per day. The estimated costs, arrived at by placing a value of three cents on each vehicle minute, is \$775,000 a year. Non-recurrent delay (caused by accidents) is considered almost identical in length of time and cost."

The survey points out that the total yearly cost

of delay on the entire 350-mile freeway system is about \$14 million. But there is more.

"Motorist aggravation also has a cost to the motorist," Luce said, stating he can't put a price on the frustrations that plague a driver once he is caught in a bottleneck.

"Although the motorist's well-being has no quantifiable cost, we believe it can be assigned a relative value," he stated.

"For example, in our approach to esthetics, we as-

sume it has value, that is, we're willing to spend money on esthetics to enhance the motorist's well-being. On congested urban freeways, we believe that reduction of motorist aggravation due to congestion is at least as important as enhancement of the motorist's well-being by improved esthetics.

"Reduction of this aggravation to an acceptable level to notice the land-motorist's frame of mind, and give him more opportunity to notice the land-

scaped freeways and scenic vistas."

The survey also points out another benefit which it says would accrue to the motorist. This would be a reduction of accidents, as quicker removal of the causes of congestion would reduce accidents.

All in all, the benefits from the little wires in the highways would be greater than the costs of putting them there, the report states.

But even so, the motorist wonders what comes next after the sensor system?

Your Right to Know Is the Key to All Your Liberties

-Comment and Opinion-

TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 1968

That Tax Spending Itch

The economic health of the state's general fund appears to be sound as a dollar, with a surplus ranging from \$100 million, depending on who is making the announcement.

Considerable criticism is being leveled at the governor for his reluctance to add appropriations to the state budget so this "nest egg" could be spent forthwith. It is interesting that elected legislators, who should be concerned with holding the line on spending and additional taxation, suddenly developed a spending itch from these unappropriated sums.

In criticizing the governor with reference to the fund surplus and adjournment of the legislature, Speaker Jesse Unruh commented, "In European countries, when the legislative branch becomes too inquisitive for the chief executive's comfort, parliament is dissolved

and sent home. This is very close to what has happened in California."

Since the apparent purpose of the statement was only to infer dictatorial behavior onto the chief executive, it also seems worth mentioning that Speaker Unruh has for some years supported an ombudsman agency for the state. This, incidentally, is a European idea.

Money is said to be the root of all evil. If true it is not surprising that a little surplus, between \$100 and \$361 million, should lead to finger-pointing.

Regrettably the lesson being overlooked is that the state can save tax monies and it can survive despite spending less.

The logical goal would be to double the surplus by next year while holding the line on new taxes.

But that might be European.

Park Vandals Warned

A crackdown on vandalism in the city's public parks has been advocated by Councilman William J. Uerkwitz.

His annoyance at park vandalism can be understood when it is realized that destruction to trees, plants, and buildings cost the city more than \$17,500 a year. That money would go a long way toward improving facilities to our park areas if available.

Councilman Uerkwitz has placed the responsibility right where it belongs, we believe: at the doorstep of

the parents. He urges that the vandals and their parents be held responsible to repair or replace the damage done to our parks.

Parents could stem a lot of such vandalism before it begins by exercising a closer watch on the activities of their children.

Night lighting, extra police patrols, warning signs, and other steps—all of them costly to the taxpayer—will help but a little if the parents neglect their responsibilities.

Speak Up for Your City, This Homeowner Advises

To the Editor:

As initiator of the Southwood drive to "Abolish the Freeway," I wish to thank you and your paper for the wonderful coverage on the freeway.

Your paper has added the "close and personal touch" that was needed so desperately.

The headlines in your Sunday paper of Aug. 18 were most enlightening. I quote: "Attitude" Top Factor in Location of Freeway, unquote.

If the people of Southwood could just understand that their vote, their voice, their feelings, and their attitudes are still important to our city government and would show their confidence by volunteering to sign these petitions—I know our city government would

stand behind us. I know they would not ignore the voice of their people.

America is in need of people who believe in their democratic rights and will use those rights to the best of their abilities.

People who say "you're wasting your time, the State has already decided, the City Council has already decided" are people who are leaving it all up to these government offices. The city government and the state want to know how we feel; they want us to get up and voice our opinions in an American, educated way; they want to know our attitudes.

How can we have the kind of government we want, the kind of city we

want if we sit back and say "it's too late, they have already decided." We, the people, either make it what it is, or it will be left up to a handful of people to decide on their own what is right for us. I say to the people of Torrance:

If you love your home; your community, your clean, healthy climate, the peaceful and quiet streets, then do something about it.

(1) Sign petitions in your area.

(2) Write to Mayor Isen and let him know how you feel.

(3) Volunteer to walk your street with a petition.

Do it now—because Oct. 10, will be "too late."

MRS. JOSEPH DUMONT
Southwood Homeowners

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Other Opinions

Bedford (Ind.) Times-Mail: People want better streets and roads and are quick to express their sentiments on that score. We wonder how many of the complainers are persons guilty of littering and draining off money for cleaning up that could be spent for better purpose of maintenance and construction.

Mesa (Ariz.) Tribune: If you don't think American politics are funny, where else can you see the spectacle of men spending millions of dollars to get elected to a job that pays only 100 grand a year?

The Warsaw Pack



ROYCE BRIER

Conventions Are Boring Despite Circus Approach

For better than a century foreigners have been perplexed by the American political scene. They don't understand the party conventions, nor the election that follows them, either.

It is not that the conventions in particular give the outward appearance of sheer disorder, lacking in purpose and dignity. The old Greek city-forums and the Roman Senate in republican days were hardly models of decorum, and the London parliament can often produce a first-rate uproar.

But the American party convention is a curious blend of gravity and nonsense baffling to foreigners and often to Americans, who have been seeing them on television for 20 years. For the intelligent it has a high content of bathos, but the degree of bathos depends on whose party is meeting. If it is my party the bathos may be written off as high spirits; if it is your party, it is execrable.

A news service polled some foreign correspondents at Miami Beach during the Republican Convention, and they were in general agreement. First, they said it looked like some kind of circus, and they said it was boring. But many Americans say this, wondering if there isn't some better way of choosing a party candidate.

Yet most of the circus, or carnival, aspect pertains to activities in behalf of candidates outside the convention sessions. The boring aspect pertain to the sessions, but this is uneven, and the delegates themselves are not bored, nor are the more zealous supporters of this or that candidate around the country.

For instance, television viewers in San Francisco could almost hear the groans of Maine viewers when the New Jersey dele-

gation demanded it be polled. This came at a time when a nomination seemed imminent, but do you think the Jersey delegates were bored to be heard?

When they were heard, it was neither sparkling nor edifying, but by God they had their rights.

Exercise of their rights didn't seem to prove anything, or advance the nomination process one whit, but if Pericles could be heard on how to meet the Spartans, why not the guy from Perth Amboy.

It is this serious purpose, wholly in accord with the tradition of a free society, which blurs out the foreground appearance of a circus. It didn't blur out the bathos, of course, or the funny hats.

Strangely, the foreign reporters did not notice that most of the bathos was not in behalf of the United States, but of the several states. It reminds us that this is still a confederation of states, a reality that does not distress the likes of George Wallace or Strom Thurmond.

A party convention may or may not nominate its best man for the Presidency, but most of them pick the man the leaders of the party think can win. This is pure gamble, as all elections have proved.

It is unlikely this latest GOP convention was more dispiriting than all that have gone before. The Republican convention in 1860 was wild and irresponsible, boring with rail-splitter gimmicks. It chose a candidate many a sober-sided party leader considered a disaster, but it didn't turn out that way.

Morning Report:

It's time for America to choose between television and national conventions. One or the other has to go.

Of course the political conventions were on the scene first. But when they started back in 1832, no one had thought up TV. So there was no problem of conflict. Soul-searching speeches could be made from the podium and it didn't matter if the delegates had more important things to do, like popping out for a pop of old 100 proof. But TV cannot hold me at the screen when I can see the delegates on the scene couldn't care less about what's being orated.

The only answer for TV survival is to produce canned audiences to listen to speeches, much as canned laughter is provided for some of its variety shows.

Abe Mellinkoff

HERB CAEN SAYS:

Hizzoner Beats The Racial Rap

Go-Go Joe Alioto has a wicked big-city kind of humor. When he was drawing up a committee for charter revision, he showed the list of names to one of his brain-trusters, who hummed: "Hmmm, I think you have too many Jewish names on the list." "I don't care about that," snapped the Mayor. Replied the advisor, "I know YOU don't, but some people will" . . . Later that day, Alioto phoned the brain-truster: "After thinking it over, maybe you're right. I added a distinguished Chinese to the list." "Fine," said the aide, "what's his name?" . . . "Jue," chuckled the Mayor. "Merrill Jue."

In one ear: If even half the hair-raising stories I hear about Union Square late at night are true, that is now the hottest (and most sordid) spot in town. Circle the Square, men. . . . Wilt the Stilt Charmbairlain, the millionaire basketballer, checked into the Hilton, got his purple Bentley convertible out of the garage, zoomed up to Clear Lake for a spot of water skiing, put the Bentley back in the garage and flew to L.A. to look for a house. No transportation problem. L.A. is where he keeps his Maserati (he makes me feel so tacky) . . . Tony Bennett switched from the Miyako Hotel to the Fairmont when the Japanese desk clerk refused to give him credit, never having heard of Tony Bennett OR his S.F.-based heart.

Quotesville: A builder of high-rise apt. houses, over a Campari at Vanessi's: "Sometimes I think this save-the-view business is being run into the ground." Exactly . . . Schoolteacher Roberta Lai to Mark Taber: "I was born and raised in the Chinatown ghetto. Then I got married and now we can afford to buy a house in a white ghetto." . . . Insurance Exec Ed Golden, musing away at Piero's: "If you really had to be a mature adult to get into a movie 'for mature adults,' most theaters would be empty" . . . KNBR's Dave Niles to a rock musician: "Is is hard work?" Rocker: "Takes constant practice. You've got to keep combing your hair till you get it right" . . . George Akins overhead this in a big downtown office, Miss Miniskirt yelling: "Awright, who put the Pill in the Xerox — it ain't re-producing!"

Sign on the Xanadu clothing store on Haight Street: "Straight Spoken Here." Frankly, I doubt it. I'll bet they don't even know what a Chicken Inspector it. Or what wen Up in Mabel's Room . . . After a drink at Vanessi's, Furrier Curtis Stewart called out "Tab, please," and got a bottle of diet Cola . . . But that's nothing. At Orestis', Gladys Winter introduced herself to Joe Piccini as follows "Hello, I'm Gladys Winter." Joe blankly, "Really Uh—I'm glad it's almost Fall . . . Our resident intellectuals: Atty. Jack Leavitt of El Cerrito hits the Baker St. Journal recently with "proof" that Sherlock Holmes was really Jack the Ripper . . . The Chinese grocery at 1295 Page has just been purchased by Neever Wong, so don't even THINK about questioning your bill.

Notes from Everywhere: Vladimir Vasilii Ivanoff of San Carlos is back from a trip to the USSR where, in a Volgograd restaurant, he twinkled to an attractive waitress: "You look like a million dollars." Waitress: "All you Americans ever think about is money!" . . . In Moscow, he tried to make a reservation at the revolving restaurant at the 1,600-ft. level of the TV tower only to be told by the head waiter: "Sorry, all seats have been reserved for two years, but do try again in 1970." Ivanoff: "It could have been worse—he could have asked me to wait at the bar" . . . There is now a street called Bridges Place in Honolulu, where, only a few years ago the general feeling was that Harry Bridges' place was at the bottom of the sea . . . Tiger Thompson is back from Mexico City, where he browsed considerably at his favorite intersection in the world: Avenida James Sullivan and Calle Miguel Schultz. As for Norman Ash, his favorite intersection is in Northridge, L.A. county, where Bircher and Babbitt Streets kiss and cross . . . Carmen Clarkson is back from Honolulu with a powder room graffito: "Diamond Head Is a Zircon" . . . And another graffito, this one at the Golden Gate Cinerama, where the marvelous and fantastic "2001" is playing: "Hal the Computer is a faggot." Sfunny. I had the same impression.